

Planning a Recreational Trail Connector

Land Information Access Association

'Partnerships for Change – First Steps Service Grant' Application

Submitted by: **The St. Joseph County Land Use Council; January 22, 2010**

Purpose Statement

The purpose of the project is to ultimately develop a 1.5 mile, non-motorized trail connecting the city of Three Rivers with a County recreational park in Fabius Township. For the purposes of the First Steps Service Grant, the intent is to organize partners and stakeholders, facilitate community concerns and consensus, and develop a trail plan to guide implementation.

Background

The City of Three Rivers and Fabius Township do have a history of working together. The two units of government have negotiated numerous 'Conditional Land Transfer Agreements' under P.A. 425 of 1984, as amended (being M.C.L. 124.21 *et seq.*). Additionally, the Three Rivers Area Chamber of Commerce regularly hosts a 'government relations committee' meeting in which representatives of the City and neighboring townships discuss issues of mutual concern. However, differences of opinion in local policy do exist. One area of disagreement is transportation and land use policy along the US-131 corridor. The US-131 corridor coincides with the boundary between the two units of government and is an area of growing retail commercial activity where pedestrian networks are limited. The two units of government have discussed the idea of implementing access management techniques with the Michigan Department of Transportation, but no further steps have occurred. The recreational trail connection is proposed to bisect this area from a location near the Three Rivers Health Medical Center (hospital) in the city limits, across US-131, and adjacent to properties in Fabius Township to the County's Meyer Broadway Park.

In 2007, the Three Rivers Area Foundation commissioned a Trails Master Plan for the City that included extensive community input. Some elements of the Plan have been implemented within the city limits; however, no implementation has been directed toward regional trail development to key locations outside the city limits – a major recommendation in the Plan that was strongly supported by the public. The initial consensus building accomplished by the Trails Master Plan, in combination with the St. Joseph County Land Use Council's interest in regional trail development, and the Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency's efforts to promote physical activity as part of the 'Fitness is a Family Affair' project, has led the partner governments and agencies to apply for the First Steps Service Grant for assistance with facilitation and trail planning.

Project Goals

The goal of the project is to organize partner governments, agencies, businesses, and property owners to achieve consensus around the proposed trail connector, and develop a plan for implementation and funding. Ultimately, with the recreational trail connector completed, the anticipated outcomes of the project include increased levels of physical activity among City and Township residents, decreased rates of obesity, increased use of Meyer Broadway Park, and improved cooperation between the City, Township, and County.

Service Expectations

Expected services from LIAA for the First Steps Service Grant include facilitation of partner and community concerns and objectives with respect to trail location and design. It is expected facilitation will not only require use of brainstorming techniques and nominal group process techniques to arrive at consensus, but will also require some mediation among competing interests in the community. Specifically, mediation may be necessary to address competition between interests that desire improving the pedestrian network with a crossing of US-131 and possibly installation of a stop light, versus interests that desire maintaining and even improving the flow of traffic along the corridor for economic development and business attraction purposes.

Service expectations also include assistance with the preparation of a basic plan for the trail connector. It is expected that this element will include preparation of spatial information (maps) and plan text that define the project and provide a vision for implementing the trail plan and ultimately constructing the trail.

The following chart details the expected services and estimated timeline:

Activity	1 st Month	2 nd Month	3 rd Month	4 th Month	5 th Month	6 th Month
1. Familiarize w/ area and organize partners						
2. Collect and prepare spatial information						
3. Facilitate community input session						
4. Compile input and prepare analysis						
5. Facilitate community feedback session						
6. Finalize trail plan						
7. Facilitate ID of implementation tasks						
8. Organize trail development committee						

Participant Information

The lead agency and contact for the project will be the St. Joseph County Land Use Council, a group of citizens and local officials with the mission to raise awareness of countywide land use values and vision through communication and education. The Land Use Council strives to heighten public awareness, leadership capacity, and citizen-based public policy development in the areas of land use planning, zoning, and economic development. Partner local governments and organizations include the City of Three Rivers, Fabius Township, the St. Joseph County Parks and Recreation Department, and the Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency.

The St. Joseph County Land Use Council will serve as the lead agency on the project with support from St. Joseph County MSU Extension. The MSUE office will handle all meeting notifications and mailings with direction from the St. Joseph County Land Use Council or LIAA. The City of Three Rivers and Fabius Township will provide facilities for meetings and public input sessions. The St. Joseph County Parks and Recreation Department and the Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency will assist with outreach and promotion of the project and specific meetings and events.

The following individuals will serve as contacts for each of the project partners:

Bruce Snook, Co-Chair
St. Joseph County Land Use Council
bcsnook@comcast.net
(269) 816-5526 (cell)

Brad Neumann, Land Policy Educator
St. Joseph County MSU Extension
neuman36@msu.edu
(269) 467-5522 (office)

Merritt Brown, Special Projects
Engineer
City of Three Rivers
mb.3rdps@verizon.net
(269) 273-1845 (office)

Stan Brueck, Chair
Fabius Township Planning
Commission
sdbrueck@hotmail.com
(269) 816-1229 (cell)

John Pence, Director
St. Joseph County Parks & Recreation
pencej@stjosephcountymi.org
(269) 467-5598 (office)

Dr. Jeff Phillips, Medical Director
Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph
Community Health Agency
phillipsj@charter.net
(269) 506-0440 (cell)

Project Area

The project area consists of approximately four square miles at the western extent of the City of Three Rivers and the eastern extent of Fabius Township. This municipal boundary largely coincides with the US-131 corridor and is characterized by 'strip commercial' retail activity bisected by the state highway five lanes in width. There are stop lights at many of the cross streets along US-

131, however there are few sidewalks and few well-marked crosswalks in the area. As a result, 'walkability' within the project area is limited.

West of the US-131 corridor in Fabius Township the project area is characterized as rural residential with housing lots scattered along county roads among farmland and woodlots. Located two miles west of the US-131 corridor is Meyer Broadway Park. The County Park includes 149 acres of natural areas featuring hiking and walking trails, rolling hills, and woodlands. A large playground, 1/2 mile paved trail, picnic pavilion, modern restrooms, sand volleyball, and 18 hole disc golf course have recently been added to the park. The park also features snow tubing hills, cross country ski trails, and picnic areas. Meyer Broadway Park is a recreational asset for the City and Township; however, it is relatively isolated because of the lack of pedestrian access.

The recreational trail connector is proposed to transcend this area from a location near the Three Rivers Health Medical Center (hospital) in the city limits, across US-131, and adjacent to properties in Fabius Township to Meyer Broadway Park. In total, the trail connector will be approximately 1.5 miles in length. Please see attached 'Potential Township/City Cooperative Trail Plan' map.

Project Commitment

Both Fabius Township and the City of Three Rivers support the project and the First Steps Service Grant application to LIAA. The Fabius Township Board of Trustees took action at the December 9, 2009 meeting to support the application to LIAA and the use of the Township Hall for conducting community meetings related to the project. Please see the attached minutes from the December 9, 2009 Fabius Township Board meeting.

The Three Rivers City Council took action at the December 15 meeting to also support the application to LIAA and the use of City facilities and staff to assist with the project. Please see the attached minutes from the December 15, 2009 Three Rivers City Council meeting.

Additional commitment to the project is provided by Waste Management's Westside Recycling and Disposal Facility. Waste Management owns and operates a facility in Fabius Township near the Three Rivers city limits and has provided land and funding for the establishment of the County's Meyer Broadway Park. Waste Management has committed to supporting the proposed project by providing the local cost share required by the terms of the First Steps Service Grant. Please see the attached letter of support from Eric Shafer, Manager of the Westside Recycling and Disposal Facility.

FABIUS TOWNSHIP BOARD
9 DECEMBER 2009
MINUTES

The regular meeting of the township board was called to order at 7:30 by Supervisor John Kroggel. Members present were Clerk Annette Ashby, Treasurer Judy Holman, and Trustee Dave Brueck and Jim O'Neill. The Pledge of Allegiance followed.

The report from Deputy Auton showed 73 complaints during November.

There were no comments from the public.

Mr. Bruce Caswell, introduced himself as a GOP candidate for the seat left vacant due to term limits by Cameron Brown in November 2010.

Mr. Bill Russell, new CEO of Three Rivers Health, introduced himself and outlined his goals for the next year.

Motion: Ms. Holman moved, and Mr. Brueck supported, to accept the agenda as presented. Following a voice vote, 5-0, M/C

Motion: Mr. O'Neill moved, and Ms. Holman supported, to approve the minutes of November 2009 as presented. Following a voice vote, 5-0, M/C

Reports:

Roads:

Motion: Mr. Brueck moved, and Mr. O'Neill supported, to pave Reed and Pleasant View roads. Following a voice vote, 2 yes-3 no Motion was defeated.

Fire Board: Discussed, briefly, rezoning the fire board property along Millard to commercial.

Assessor: No report.

Intergovernmental: Mr. O'Neill said that Bill Russell had attended their meeting to discuss TR Health plans and optimistic outlook.

Planning Commission: Mr. S. Brueck said that the township master plan will be revisited in 2010. Also, the PC, the ZBA, and the Wetlands Advisory want to do a mailing re: info from each of those committees.

Motion:

Mr. O'Neill moved, and Ms. Holman supported, to approve a township information guide, not to exceed \$250. Following a voice vote, 5-0, M/C
Cork Babcock submitted his resignation from the PC. Accepted with regret. Mr. Kroggel said that two people have expressed an interest in the position, but if anyone else is interested, please call him or Stan Brueck.

ZBA: Mr. Bradley reported their decision "any variances granted are valid for one year from this date or as long as a building/zoning permit granted during that year is still in effect." They also discussed their preference for the secretary to be paid a flat fee per meeting rather than the hourly which is the way the Planning Commission secretary is paid. The township board will take this into consideration during the 2010-11 budget discussion.

Wetlands Advisory: Mr. Barnes said they are seeking an estimate for delineation of wetlands along the M-60 corridor. They have reduced the area to be considered as part of this corridor.

Motion: Ms. Holman moved, and Mr. O'Neill supported to grant the Wetlands Advisory permission to send a request for bid to Groundwater Associates LLC for this task. Following a voice vote, 5-0, M/C
They are preparing notices to go to residents re: permit requirements for wetlands.

Constables: Mr. Falborski reported no complaints last month. And Mr. Malcolm completed the liquor inspections.

Supervisor: Mr. Kroggel commented on the supervisors' meeting where Brad Neuman spoke on various topics. Mr. Kroggel said he was impressed with his knowledge of the county in particular.

Old Business:

Budget adjustment: See attached.

Motion: Ms. Holman moved, and Ms. Ashby supported, to approve the budget adjustments as recommended. Following a voice vote, 5-0, M/C

New Business:

Motion: Ms. Holman moved, and Ms. Ashby supported, to approve the purchase of a stand alone printer not to exceed \$150 Following a voice vote, 5-0, M/C Funds will be taken from the Supervisor's budget.

B. Website – ZCSS will update/modernize our site for \$1250. Mr. Kroggel will seek additional quotes for the January meeting.

C. Land Use Council

Motion: Ms. Holman moved, and Mr. Brueck seconded, to support the First Steps Service Grant, the purpose of which is to organize partners and stakeholders, facilitate community concerns and consensus, and develop a trail plan to guide implementation. This is to bring a non-motorized trail from TR Health to Meyer Park, 2 ½ miles. Following a voice vote, 5-0, M/C

Scott Roderick, Fabius Park Fire Chief, introduced himself and welcomed comments and questions anytime.

Treasurer's Report:

Motion: Ms. Holman moved, and Ms. Ashby supported, to approve disbursements for November totaling \$48,901.53. Following a voice vote, 5-0, M/C

Adjournment:

Motion: Ms. Holman moved, and Mr. Brueck supported, to adjourn the meeting. Following a voice vote, 5-0, M/C

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15.

Submitted by: Annette Ashby

**Meeting Minutes
City Commission Meeting
Three Rivers, Michigan
December 15, 2009**

1. Call to Order

Mayor Balog called the regular meeting of the Three Rivers City Commission to order at 6:00 p.m. in the Commission Chambers of City Hall.

2. Roll Call

The following members were present at roll call:

Daryl Griffith	Wendy Shank
George Ramsey	Earl Stark
	Allen Balog, Mayor

By consent, the Commission excused the absence of Commissioner McNary due to personal reasons and Commissioner Foster because of the road conditions. Commissioner Foster joined the meeting at 6:02 p.m.

3. Invocation

Pastor Glenn Shock of Agape Family Church gave the invocation.

4. Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Balog led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

5. Approval of Agenda

It was moved by Commissioner Foster and seconded by Commissioner Stark to approve the agenda.

The motion passed 6-0.

6. Presentations and Recognitions

a. Recognition of Waste Management Westside Landfill

Mayor Balog presented Eric Shafer, Waste Management Manager, with a certificate of recognition. Mr. Shafer thanked the Commission.

b. Introduction of James Enright

City Attorney O'Malley introduced Attorney James Enright as special counsel for the MDEQ order. Discussion included:

- Reviewed the public hearing process;
- January 14 meeting date;
- City would help publicize;
- Community Center as a location;
- Other possible dates, would like 4-7 or 5-8 p.m.

City Attorney O'Malley asked that the Commissioners not set a specific date to try to be flexible with MDEQ scheduling.

c. Three Rivers City Website

Chad Ely of ZCSS presented the new City website.

d. APWA 2009 Branch Award – Quality of Life

City Manager Bippus presented the Association of Public Works Award for the Riverwalk extension.

7. Approval of Minutes

a. Minutes of the Regular Meeting held December 1, 2009

It was moved by Commissioner Stark and seconded by Commissioner Foster to approve the minutes as presented.

The motion passed 6-0.

8. **Public Hearings**

There were no public hearings scheduled.

9. **General Comments**

Richard Price of 623 Erie Street asked about bottled water because of the chlorine and commented on the lack of sidewalk on US-131.

City Manager Bippus mentioned that street and sidewalk planning was being considered for the next budget year.

10. **Business**

a. **Communications**

1. **Pedestrian Trail to Meyer Broadway Park**

Bruce Snook of 620 Pine Street and Dennis McCarthy of the St. Joseph County Land Use Council supported the project.

It was moved by Commissioner Griffith and seconded by Commissioner Foster to support the Land Information Access Association First Steps Service Grant for planning trails in St. Joseph County.

Discussion included:

- Excited to see a walkable community, including beyond the City;
- 4-6 month period of gathering public input;
- Material would be determined by the path;
- Easements would be necessary;
- Waste Management would provide the match.

The motion passed 6-0.

2. **East Parking Lot Addition**

It was moved by Commissioner Foster and seconded by Commissioner Griffith to approve and appropriate \$3,500 for the East Parking Lot fund to hire DLZ Engineering for design work.

Discussion included that the goal was to have design completed for budget discussions.

The motion passed 6-0.

b. **Consent Agenda**

It was moved by Commissioner Foster and seconded by Commissioner Stark to approve the consent agenda as presented.

The motion passed 6-0.

1. **Invoices Payable**

The Commission authorized payment of the invoices.

2. **Cemetery Board Minutes of November 2, 2009**

The Commission placed the minutes on file.

3. **Library Board Minutes of November 24, 2009**

The Commission placed the minutes on file.

4. **Industrial Development Authority Minutes of October 8, 2009**

The Commission placed the minutes on file.

5. **Clean Water Plant November 2009 Report**

The Commission placed the report on file.

6. Planning Commission Minutes of December 7, 2009

The Commission placed the minutes on file.

7. Fire Department November 2009 Report

The Commission placed the report on file.

8. Police Department November 2009 Report

The Commission placed the report on file.

11. Appointments

a. Appointments to Advisory Boards and Commissions

It was moved by Commissioner Griffith and seconded by Commissioner Foster to reappoint Craig Ball to the Board of Review with a term ending May 1, 2012 and appoint alternate Alden Zimlich to the Board of Review with a term ending May 1, 2010.

The motion passed 6-0.

12. City Commission and City Manager's Communications

Commissioner Griffith asked about the foam-over with the Clean Water Plant.

City Manager Bippus reported that the cause was not yet known.

Commissioner Griffith asked about Commission videos on the website.

Commissioner Foster asked about 3 ornamental lights out on South Main.

Mayor Balog thanked Lockport officials for the proposed demolition of the Comfort Motel. He mentioned that it was the last 2009 meeting.

13. Adjournment

It was moved by Commissioner Foster and seconded by Commissioner Griffith to adjourn the meeting.

The motion passed 6-0.

Mayor Balog adjourned the meeting at 7:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Lindsay Howes
City Clerk



WESTSIDE RECYCLING AND DISPOSAL FACILITY
A WASTE MANAGEMENT COMPANY

P.O. Box 392
14094 M-60 West
Three Rivers, MI 49093
(616) 279-5444
(616) 273-1662 Fax

December 17, 2009

Partnerships for Change Sustainable Communities – First Steps
Land Information Access Association
324 Munson Ave.
Traverse City, MI 49686

To Whom It May Concern:

Please accept this letter of support for the St. Joseph County Land Use Council's application for the 'First Steps Service Grant'.

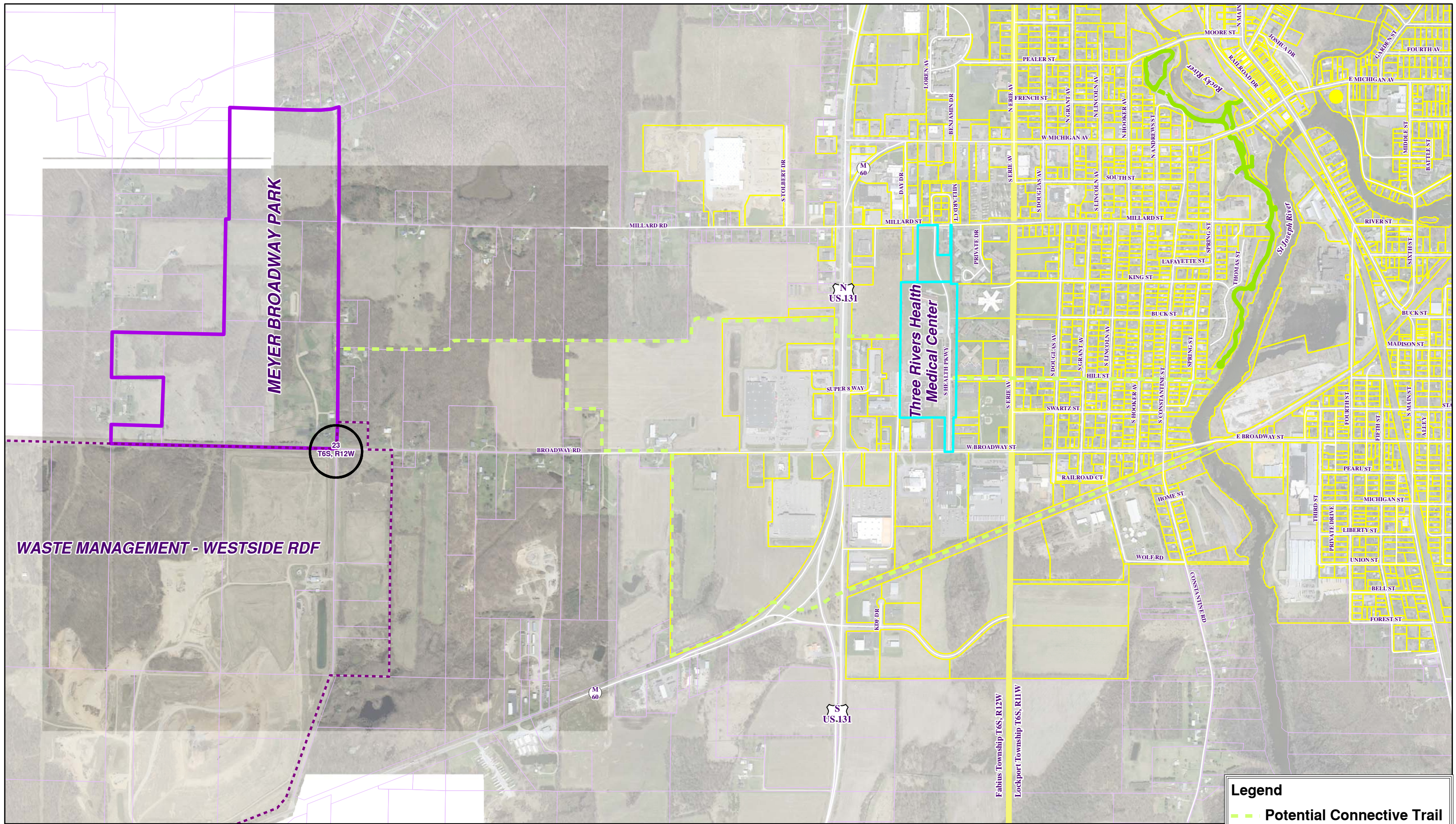
Waste Management owns and operates the Westside Landfill just outside the City of Three Rivers in Fabius Township. We continually strive to maintain positive relations with our host community and support initiatives that improve the community's quality of life. Waste Management also supports the St. Joseph County Parks and Recreation Department and has provided the land and monetary resources for the County to develop the Meyer Broadway Park, located in Fabius Township just north of our facility.

We remain committed to providing recreational opportunities to residents of our Three Rivers area host community and support the extension of a recreational trail connector from Three Rivers to Meyer Broadway Park. In fact, Waste Management has offered the City of Three Rivers and Fabius Township financial resources to cover the 20 percent cost share required of 'First Steps Service Grant' communities.

The proposed project represents an excellent opportunity to improve quality of life for area residents while fostering cooperation across municipal lines. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Eric Shafer, District Manager
Waste Management of Michigan, Inc.

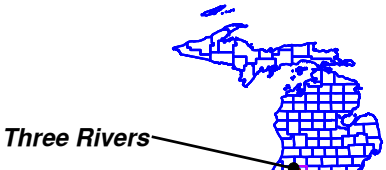


Legend

- Potential Connective Trail
- City Riverwalks
- Meyer Broadway Park
- WM Westside RDF
- City Parcel Lines
- Township Parcel Lines

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Scale: 1" = 1000'



POTENTIAL TOWNSHIP/CITY COOPERATIVE TRAIL PLAN

This map is provided by the City of Three Rivers (the "City"). The person or entity receiving this map (the "User") agrees; (1) that there are no warranties of any kind; (2) that use of this map is at the User's sole risk; (3) that the City shall not be liable for any damages to User or third party; and (4) this map may not be used by any third party without the specific written consent of the City.

